

Superintendent Message – February 3, 2010

I am very excited to announce that the Moreland School District may be among the first in our state to adopt an innovative new educational program, Race to the Top, if federal government funds are approved to fund the program in California.

On Tuesday, January 5, the state Assembly passed SBX5-1 and SBX5-4 to help qualify California for a share of the \$4.35 billion stimulus offered as a Race to the Top grant, the largest investment in school reform ever offered by the federal government. Race to the Top is building on the success seen in the last decade with the No Child Left Behind program. According to the U.S Department of Education, it will reward states for past accomplishments, create incentives for future improvements, and challenge states to create comprehensive strategies for addressing four areas identified by the government as needing to be reformed in order to drive school improvement. I am proud to report that the Moreland School District has already been successfully implementing strategies to grow in the four identified areas over the last few years:

- ***Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace.*** Moreland has already seen incredible growth in student achievement in the one year since adopting the benchmark assessment program.
- ***Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most.*** The Moreland School District knows that our dedicated staff is the source of our educational success. That is why “attract, support, and retain exemplary staff” was included in our mission statement, and programs put in place to increase opportunities in support of our talented staff.
- ***Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.*** Moreland teachers are ahead of the curve, in that they are already using data from benchmark assessments to shape daily instruction to meet their student’s needs. Principals are working with their staff to ensure that children are being instructed in ways that will help them reach their full potential as responsible, caring citizens.
- ***Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.*** Anderson Elementary School has been nationally recognized for jumping 136 points in the Academic Performance Index (*Learning to Bridge the Achievement Gap*, New York Times, Nov. 20, 2009). Anderson has been a low performing school that has turned around, and we continue to focus on raising the achievement of all our schools, even our high performing ones.

As the state moves forward in procuring this grant, we will continue to provide information about the exciting changes you can expect to see in Moreland as we embrace this educational opportunity. Our highest priority is providing the best education for our students, and thank you for partnering with us in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

Glen Ishiwata
Superintendent, Moreland School District